

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for displaying a message in connection with an audiovisual production, the method comprising:

displaying the audiovisual production; and

displaying a message relating to a portion of the audiovisual production.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the message is alphanumeric text displayed in a text window.

3. The method of claim 2, further comprising:

accepting a signal from a viewer input device to resize an area used to display the audiovisual production; and

accepting a signal from a viewer input device to allow resizing of the text window.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the message includes a reference to a second portion of the audiovisual production.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the message includes an icon defining a portion of the audiovisual production to be displayed upon selection of the icon.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein at least a portion of the message is superimposed over the display of the audiovisual production.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the process of displaying the defined message comprises:

displaying a plurality of headers, each of which corresponds to a message and related messages;

accepting signals from a viewer input device to select a header; and

expanding the message and related messages corresponding to the selected header so that details of the message and related messages are displayed.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the messages are generated by an instant messaging system.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the messages are generated by a chat room system.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein the messages are generated by an electronic mail system.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein the messages are generated by a message board system.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the process of displaying the defined messages comprises:

displaying a plurality of headers, wherein each header corresponds to a message and related messages and corresponds to a point in time in the playback of the audiovisual production;

accepting a signal from a viewer input device to select a header; and

displaying, in response to the accepted signal to select a header, a portion of the audiovisual production beginning with the point in time corresponding with the selected header.

13. A method for synchronizing viewer-inputted messages with playback of an audiovisual production, the method comprising:

associating a given message with a determined point in time of the playback; and

displaying the given message at the determined point in time during the playback.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein playback occurs using media accessed local to a display system.

15. The method of claim 13, wherein playback occurs using media accessed remotely from a display platform.

16. The method of claim 13, wherein the process of associating comprises using time codes.

17. The method of claim 13, wherein the process of associating comprises using DVD index information.

18. The method of claim 13, wherein the playback comprises accessing a CD-ROM.

19. The method of claim 13, wherein playback comprises accessing a DVD.

20. The method of claim 13, wherein the process of displaying the given message comprising using a threaded messaging system.

21. A method for displaying text in connection with playback of an audiovisual production comprises the steps of:

providing playback of an audiovisual production on a display system; and
displaying a viewer generated message regardless of the display system at a pre-determined point in time of the playback.

22. The method of claim 21 further comprising the steps of:
storing a plurality of the messages on a server remote from the display platform; and

transferring a first portion of the messages from the server to the display platform when playback is initiated.

23. The method of claim 21 further comprising the step of transferring a second portion of the messages from the server to the display platform in response to playback of the audiovisual production reaching a selected time code.

24. The method of claim 22 further comprising the steps of:
ranking the plurality of messages in accordance with a viewer selected criteria;
defining a threshold; and
transferring a portion of the ranked messages from the server to the display platform when playback where each of the ranking messages have a rank above the threshold.

25. A system for displaying messages in connection with playback of prerecorded media to produce an audiovisual production, the system comprising:

a viewer interface;

a receiving system for receiving a signal from the viewer interface to define a message during playback of the audiovisual production;

a determination system to associate the message to a point in the prerecorded media;

a storage system for storing the message along with an indication of the associated point in the playback; and

a displaying system for displaying the message in a window adjacent to a window displaying the playback of the audiovisual production, and substantially at the associated point in time of the playback.

26. The system of claim 25 wherein the storage system further comprises a peer-to-peer network accessible over the Internet.

27. The system of claim 25 wherein the storage system further comprises a message server.

28. The system of claim 25 wherein the display system further comprises:

- a time code detector;
- a local memory for storing the messages;
- a computer for associating at least one of the messages stored in the local memory with a corresponding time code and for displaying the message upon detection of the corresponding time code during playback of the audiovisual production.

29. The system of claim 28 wherein the computer controls the duration of display for each of the messages and for ensuring a minimum display duration for each of the messages during playback of the audiovisual production.

30. The system of claim 29 wherein the computer further associates a ranking with each of the messages stored in the local memory.

31. The system of claim 30 wherein the computer further monitors the time code associated with each message and in the event that the duration of display for a first message overlaps with the display of a second message, displaying the first message if its ranking is higher than the second message and otherwise displaying only the second message.

32. A computer-readable medium including instructions for displaying text in connection with an audiovisual production, the computer-readable medium comprising:

one or more instructions for receiving a signal from a viewer interface to define alphanumeric text;

one or more instructions for displaying the defined alphanumeric text in a first display adjacent to a second display of the audiovisual production; and

one or more instructions for displaying a listing of the defined alphanumeric text adjacent to the second display of the audiovisual production.

33. The computer-readable medium of claim 32 further comprising:

one or more instructions for receiving messages from a message server remote from the computer-readable medium.

34. The computer-readable medium of claim 33 further comprising:

one or more instructions for associating messages from the message server with karma points and displaying only those messages have karma points exceeding a pre-determined threshold.

35. A system for displaying computer-readable medium comprising:

a pre-recorded audiovisual production;

a display for displaying the audiovisual production; and

one or more instructions for receiving message threads from a message server in communication with the system; the message threads comprising commentary relating to the content of the audiovisual production; each of the message threads associated with a time code and selectively displayed on the display in combination with the playback of the audiovisual production.

36. The system of claim 35 wherein the pre-recorded audiovisual production is recorded on a DVD.

37. The system of claim 35 further comprising:

a master DVD player;

a communication network;

a plurality of slave DVD players coupled to the master DVD player by the communication network; and

a server, coupled to the master DVD player and the slave DVD players by the communication network, for initiating a presentation of the audiovisual presentation.

38. The system of claim 37 wherein the server further comprises a memory for storing a list of viewers and assigning a token to the viewer associated with the DVD player designated as the master DVD.

39. The system of claim 35 further comprising:
a plurality of DVD players, each having a DVD pre-recorded with the audiovisual production;

a communication network coupling the plurality of DVD players; and
means for designating one of the plurality of DVD players as a master DVD where the master DVD controls the playback of the audiovisual production by each of the remaining plurality of DVD players.

40. The system of claim 35 further comprising
a plurality of DVD players for displaying the audiovisual production; and
means for conducting a group presentation of the audiovisual presentation among a group of geographically dispersed viewers where one viewer controls the operation of each of the plurality of DVD players.

41. The system of claim 35 wherein the pre-recorded audiovisual production is transmitted to the display system by a communication system selected from the group of cable, satellite or Internet communication networks.

42. The method of claim 35, wherein the playback comprises accessing a digital recording and player device.

43. A method for synchronizing messages with playback of an audiovisual production, the method comprising:

providing a viewer with at least one message related to the audiovisual production, the message linked to a determined point in time of the audiovisual production; and

initiating playback of the audiovisual production beginning at the determined point in time in response to a selection by the viewer.

44. The method of claim 43, further comprising:
transferring the message to a display system from a message server; and
transferring the audiovisual production to the display system.

45. The method of claim 44, wherein playback occurs using media
accessed remotely from the display platform.

46. The method of claim 43, wherein the message includes an embedded
icon so that when the icon is selected, playback of the audiovisual production jumps to the
determined point in time.

47. The method of claim 46, wherein the determined point in time includes
a beginning time for a portion of the audiovisual production playback.

48. The method of claim 46, wherein the determined point in time includes
an end time for a portion of the audiovisual production playback.